

# Frequently Asked Travel Questions

## Department of Treasury, Departmental Offices



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## **Answers**

### **What is the Federal Travel Regulations (FTR)?**

The [Federal Travel Regulations](#) (FTR) is the government-wide travel policy issued by the General Services Administration (GSA) as set out in Federal statutes. All Federal travelers must adhere to this set of rules, as supplemented by those areas where an agency has discretion in policy (see DO and Treasury Directives).

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### **What needs to be done prior to traveling the first time?**

The following documents should be filled out:

[Travel Manager Access Form](#) (to BPD/ARC)

[Direct Deposit Form](#) (to BPD/ARC)

[Travel Charge Card Application](#) (to DO Travel Office)

[Traveler Profile Sheets](#) will go to the Travel Management Center, Omega World Travel.

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### **How do I prepare travel authorizations and vouchers in Travel Manager?**

The Travel Manager User Training Guide provides detailed instructions for travel planners. Contact the D.O. Travel Office for copies of the guide.

Periodic Travel Manager (TM) training sessions are provided for users. Please contact the BPD customer service call center on 304-480-8000 or E-mail them at: [travel@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:travel@bpd.treas.gov) to get assistance entering, routing or approving documents in TM. BPD can also be contacted for answers to any traveler's or document preparer's other questions concerning TM.

Please contact the DO Travel Office on (202) 622-2940 if you have specific questions concerning DO travel policy.

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### **Does the traveler need a printed copy of the authorization?**

No, electronic processing of travel documents eliminates the need for printing the authorization in order to obtain approvals. The traveler is responsible for knowing what is authorized and may request a printed copy. Most hotels accept the Government identification as proof a traveler is entitled to Government rates. Some rental car agencies, however, may request a copy of the authorization.

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### **When should I turn in my voucher, and when will I be paid?**

Travelers must submit a travel voucher in Travel Manager within 5 workdays after the end of the trip. Travelers normally have reimbursement in their account within 2 to 3 days after the approving official has electronically signed the voucher.

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### **How do I know if my travel voucher has been processed?**

Travel planners can verify Travel Manager to see if the voucher has been transferred to the accounting system. The terms "data linked" or "extracted" are used to show the status of fully processed documents.

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### **What needs to be accomplished to correctly set up or change the routing and approvals in TM?**

Routing lists are maintained in Travel Manager for each traveler. Each list identifies to whom the traveler's documents route to for review and approval. The appropriate routing list must be selected in the traveler's personal information for the document to route properly. If the document is to route to a different approving official than normal, an alternate routing list can be chosen in the

traveler's personal information without contacting BPD or the DO Travel Office.

If members in the routing list need to be added or deleted, send an email to the BPD customer service center ([travel@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:travel@bpd.treas.gov)) with the name of the routing list and an explanation of the change. Up until April 30, 2002 the e-mail should be sent to the DO Travel Office.

To create a new routing list, complete the Travel Manager Routing Profiles Worksheet (link to the form) and the applicable Travel Manager Routing Profiles Worksheet (link to the 3 separate forms). Note that there is a separate Travel Manager Routing Profiles Worksheet for authorizations, vouchers, and local vouchers. The forms should be e-mailed to the BPD customer service center ([travel@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:travel@bpd.treas.gov)). Once the new routing has been setup in TM, the routing will need to be added to the traveler's personal information.

To change the routing after the document has been signed, please call BPD ARC Travel Services at 304-480-8000.

### **What needs to be accomplished to correctly set up or change a group in TM?**

A group is a set of support staff, budget reviewers, or approving officials that can access, create, edit and view documents for particular travelers. Normally, travelers do not have access to a group and can only view their own documents in TM. To create or make changes to a group, please complete the Travel Manager Group Worksheet (link to the form). The form should be e-mailed to the BPD customer service center ([travel@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:travel@bpd.treas.gov)).

### **How do I make reservations?**

DO Travelers must use Omega World Travel, the designated Travel Management Center (TMC) for all reservations. Travel planners may make reservations for travelers either by calling (202-622-2950), or faxing (202-622-0922) the TMC.

Omega World Travel offers additional government travel information on their web site at <http://www.owt.net/>.

TMC use ensures compliance with the FTR. Non-compliance resulting in increased costs may be borne by the traveler.

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### **What types of airfare may I select?**

Travelers must use the government contract fare in most circumstances. Types of common fares are: (also see [Travel By Air](#))

### Traditional Contract Fares **ALWAYS USE**

- Fully refundable
- Last seat availability
- No restrictions
- Ticketed 2 days prior to departure

### Capacity Controlled Contract Fares **ALWAYS USE**

- Fully refundable/lower priced than standard govt. fare
- Limited seats and not available in all markets
- Can purchase until departure if available
- Ticketed 2 days prior to departure

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### **How do I account for the TMC transaction fee?**

The TMC transaction fee is automatically charged to DO when tickets are processed. No action will be required on the traveler's behalf.

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### **How do I charge my airline tickets?**

Departmental Offices has elected to use a centrally billed travel charge card account (CBA). Call the Travel Office on (202) 622-5611 (extension #6 or #4) should you have any questions.

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### **Can I make personal travel plans along with my official travel plans?**

Yes, personal travel plans can be combined with official travel, however this must be reflected in Travel Manager. A cost analysis will need to be prepared comparing the travel cost that would normally have been incurred (official travel) to the actual cost incurred (official and personal). The employee may only be reimbursed the lesser of the two amounts.

Travel Planners must separately identify the official travel needs to the TMC for determination of the transportation cost to be charged to a government travel charge card. Any additional costs must be charged to the traveler's personal credit card. If the addition of personal travel places any cancellation restrictions on the ticket, any penalty may be billed to the traveler if the trip is cancelled for any reason.

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### **Can I use frequent flyer points?**

Federal employees are now allowed to retain frequent flyer miles/promotional benefits earned on official travel for personal use. New and previously earned mileage may be used for free airline tickets or upgrades in seating. You may accumulate and/or use frequent flyer miles for free trips and upgrades in seating.

#### **Frequent Traveler Benefits At-A-Glance**

- Travelers should establish their accounts with the airlines they normally use. Any costs to do this are not reimbursable expenses.
- Call your authorized TMC with your frequent flyer numbers and/or have your Travel Planner update your self-booking profile. The TMC will report the account number with each ticket, but may charge the traveler for any research questions about mileage not crediting.
- Redemptions of mileage for free tickets will not involve the TMC. Travelers should call the airlines directly.
- Redemptions of mileage for seating upgrades must be done through the TMC AFTER the ticket is issued, which for a contract fare is 2 to 3 days prior to departure. DO NOT call the airline to upgrade before the ticket is issued.
- All other FTR provisions must be followed.
  - Tickets must be charged to a Government-issued charge card.
  - Contract Air carriers must be used unless you meet an FTR exception.

The [GSA advisory](#) is available here.

Please contact the Travel Office on (202) 622-2940 if you have additional questions.

### **May I use a rental car when I travel?**

A traveler may rent a vehicle, if authorized or approved as advantageous to the government.

### **May I use my own vehicle when I travel?**

Use of a privately owned vehicle (POV) may also be authorized when advantageous to the government. Reduced POV mileage rates may be authorized if there is a government vehicle available, and POV is chosen.

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### **Is it mandatory to use a travel charge card when traveling?**

Yes. Employees who travel are required to use a government issued Citibank travel charge card. The card enables travelers to carry less cash, receive government discounts, and obtain cash advances from automated teller machines (ATMs).

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**Can I obtain a cash advance?**

If an advance is required and you have a travel charge card, use your ATM access to obtain an advance. If you do not have a travel charge card, you may obtain an advance if requested on the travel authorization. The advance is made by direct deposit and MUST be requested at least 7 days prior to departure.

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**How much money should/may I obtain from the ATM while on official travel?**

Travel Manager provides an “advance authorized amount” on travel authorizations for specific trips. This amount can serve as a guide to determine the maximum amount you may withdraw (limited to \$500 daily). You should only withdraw the amount of cash needed for cash expenses, since many travel expenses can be charged to the credit card.

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**When should I pay the travel charge card statement?**

The charge card statement should be **PAID IN FULL** as soon as it is received. Maintaining a good payment record is essential for remaining in the travel charge card program. Severe delinquency may result in adverse affects to an employees personal credit rating and employment.

GSA Do's and Don'ts:

[http://www.gsa.gov/attachments/GSA\\_PUBLICATIONS/pub/smartpaytravhints.pdf](http://www.gsa.gov/attachments/GSA_PUBLICATIONS/pub/smartpaytravhints.pdf)

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**How do I get reimbursed for ATM fees?**

The travel charge card is assessed a fee for each cash withdrawal from an ATM. The current fee is 1.25% of the cash amount withdrawn. Your ATM or teller receipt may not state this fee, but it will be charged to your charge card along with the cash advance amount. In addition, some financial institutions may assess a user fee for ATM withdrawals, but this amount will be printed on the receipt. These fees are reimbursable if included on the travel voucher.

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**Can I use my travel charge card for retail purchases?**

No. Personal expenses cannot be charged to the Government travel charge card. Official travel expenses such as lodging, meals, and gasoline may be charged on the card. The Travel Services Branch monitors the timeliness of payments and the types of expenses charged to the card.

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### **Where can I stay when on official travel?**

Travelers should stay at hotels that offer rates within the applicable per diem whenever possible.

- **FEMA Approved Hotels are required.**
- **GSA's Preferred Lodging program is recommended.**

When authorized, travelers may elect to stay with relatives or friends, but cannot be reimbursed for lodging in these situations.

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### **Which states are tax-exempt?**

Lodging expenses charged to an individual are not exempt from state and local taxes in most states. Hotels in some states require a tax exemption form from the traveler. A list of tax-exempt states is located on the Internet. [TaxExempt](#)

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### **Will I be reimbursed for taxes charged on lodging expenses?**

Yes. Domestic lodging taxes are reimbursed as a miscellaneous expense. Do not include as part of the lodging cost.

No. Foreign lodging taxes are included in the foreign per diem rates.

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### **When am I eligible for per diem expenses?**

- You perform official travel away from your official station, or other areas defined by DO. \*
- You incur per diem expenses while performing official travel; and
- You are in a travel status for more than 12 hours.

(\*) Treasury Directive (TD) 74-15 defines local travel for all Treasury employees. TD 74-15 determines per diem eligibility. Local travel is defined as travel performed within 50 miles of the permanent duty station (PDS) or residence from which an employee commutes daily. This may be reduced to 30 miles from the PDS /residence when travel involves training/conference attendance or severe conditions that may endanger the health or safety of an employee. Reference: [TD 74-15](#)

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### **How do I determine per diem rates?**

Travel Manager contains per diem rates for most areas of the country.

Entitlement to per diem is explained in the FTR and the Travel Program Guide. If



a specific location is not listed in Travel Manager, contact the DO Travel Office for assistance. [Per Diem rates](#).

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### **When may actual expenses be authorized?**

Approving officials may determine that the maximum per diem rate is inadequate and authorize reimbursement of actual subsistence expenses because of special or unusual circumstances. The actual expense allowable shall not exceed 300% of the applicable maximum per diem rate.

#### **Reasons for Actual Expense Authorizations**

- **Lodging needed at a particular hotel because of conference, meetings or training.**
- **Costs in an area have temporarily escalated due to a special event or function (e.g., Olympics, Mardi Gras)**
- **Affordable lodging is not available within reasonable commuting distance and the extra transportation costs result in little or no savings.**

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### **What policy exists in addition to the FTR related to local travel?**

[Treasury Directive 74-15](#) provides additional guidance on local travel.

### **When do I use a local travel voucher?**

A local travel voucher is used to obtain reimbursement for official travel within the area of your permanent duty station (see above question). There is no pre-authorization form required, but local travel should only be performed when an Approving Official directs the traveler to do so.

Local travel claims must be submitted at least quarterly and before the end of the fiscal year (see the procedures below).

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### **How do I get reimbursed for phone calls made while in travel status?**

Travelers should either use an agency phone card or claim their calls on the travel voucher. Calls charged to the agency phone card must not be claimed on the travel voucher.

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**Travelers without an agency phone card:** Approving officials may approve brief personal calls home. All reimbursable calls should be listed on the voucher with an indication if the call was for business or personal reasons. DO encourages the use of your government issued cell phone when traveling.

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**If I have more questions, whom do I contact?**

**BDP ARC Support Desk .....(304) 480-8000**

- Travel Manager access
- Passwords
- Printing problems
- Travel Manager data entry/questions/concerns

e-mail: [travel@bpd.treas.gov](mailto:travel@bpd.treas.gov)

**DO Travel Office.....(202) 622-2940**

- Routine travel policy questions
- Detailed FTR travel policy questions
- Official Government Passports

**Government Travel Card .....(202) 622-5611**

- Citibank government travel card questions and applications

**Travel Management Center.....(202) 622-2950**

**24 hour emergency Number.....(800) 685-6342**

- Airline, train, hotel and rental car reservations
- Cancellations and itinerary changes
- Official Government Visa's